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**KLUANE
NATIONAL PARK
PLANNING
PROGRAM**

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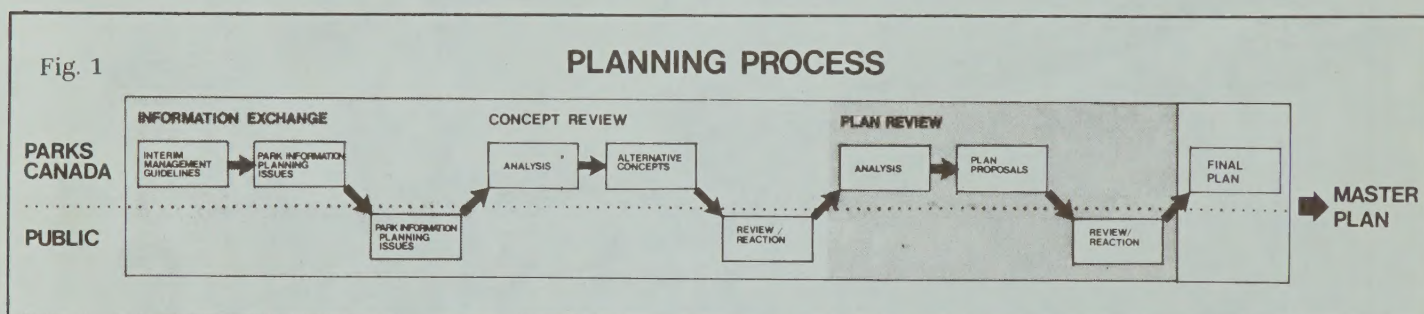
Kluane Master Planning Program

The Kluane National Park master planning program has just been completed to stage two (concept review) of the process illustrated in figure 1. In stage one Parks Canada presented information on Kluane's characteristics. The public added to this information and expressed concerns and ideas on the park's future. In stage two plan principles and four alternative concept plans were prepared from an analysis of this base of information. During June, July and August at meetings and through written submissions many people told of their preferred plan option and how to improve on it.

The public participation program in stage 2 was divided into four phases. First two booklets were advertised and mailed out: **Kluane Alternatives** which described the four concept plans and **Information Analysis** which outlined the analysis used to develop the concepts. Second, the planning team met with representatives of the media and 19 organizations in Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba who participated in the "Information Exchange Stage" of

the program. The third step involved public meetings in Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay, Haines Junction, Whitehorse, Vancouver, Edmonton and Winnipeg. Open Houses were also held. During these two periods people had the opportunity to ask questions and tell Parks Canada planners of their preferred plan. The fourth phase provided time for people and organizations to send along their written ideas and suggestions. 1 petition and 157 written submissions were received by the closing date, August 18, 1978.

Public comment in the Kluane Master Planning program has challenged the agency to consider a wide range of possibilities for Kluane and develop an intimate understanding of their implications. In stage 3 the task of Parks Canada is to establish priority among the plan elements presented in Stage 2. This is a difficult task in which all areas of information including public comment must be carefully integrated. You will be asked to review this in the Spring.



As with the stage one summary, this report describes a broad range of public review and reaction to the four alternative concepts. Copies of all submissions and reports of the public meetings are available for your study at the following locations.

**Park Headquarters
Haines Junction**

**Yukon Archives
Whitehorse**

**Parks Canada
Prairie Regional Office
114 Garry Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**Government Documents Section
Main Branch of the Public Libraries in
Edmonton and Vancouver**

Plan Principles

"Kluane's greatest asset is its large expanse of pristine wilderness, but it is an asset that must be treated with great care; it can all too easily be lost if the master plan is not responsive to the needs of the Kluane environment as well as the needs of present and future users of this national park."

John Theberge, Waterloo, Ontario.

Before the four plans were developed, objectives and principles were drawn up. These set the limits and guided the production of the four options. Most who spoke at the meetings or wrote commented on these principles. The principles dealt with seven aspects of Kluane planning: wilderness, resources, natural processes, access, interpretation, recreation, and visitor services.

Generally there was strong agreement with the principles as outlined in the alternatives. Some debate centred around the access, recreation and visitor service principles. One side felt that these three did not provide enough opportunity for all people to use and benefit from the park. Others saw these as opening the door for too much activity which would ruin the park.

As in the first stage, the concept of wilderness was accepted by most. It was stated again and again that the maintenance of Kluane's wilderness character should be the major park objective. A number of people quoted a sentence from page three of the booklet **Kluane Alternatives** to support their point of view: "Humanity has a moral responsibility to act in the best interests of other life forms, especially in areas like Kluane."

Topics Common to all Alternatives

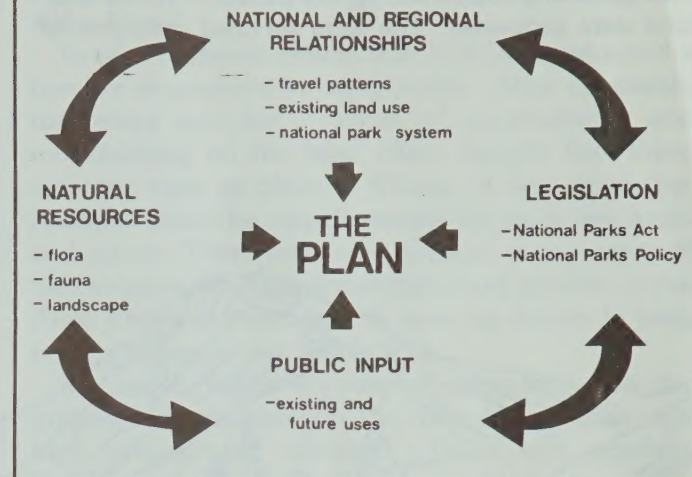
Each plan was comprised of a number of accepted ideas mainly suggested by the public in stage one. These were chosen after careful analysis of all of the factors affecting the decision. This relationship is shown in figure 2. The booklet **Information Analysis** on pages 24 - 70 describes the analysis used to accept or reject each idea. An idea, if accepted was incorporated in one or more of the alternative plans. A few topics were common to all four plans: resource conservation objectives, special preservation areas, interpretation objectives, regional planning, trails, camping, and wilderness expeditions.

"I am in favor of special preservation areas. However, those proposed are too few and most of them are very small. Also it should be outlined in detail how they will be managed. One of the disadvantages of putting a place on a map is that it attracts attention."

Manfred Hoefs, Whitehorse, Y.T.

Fig. 2

MASTER PLAN FRAMEWORK



The special preservation area concept was generally supported. In looking at the specific areas designated, many felt more should be added and some increased in size. They said vegetation communities had been well covered but mammals and birds were not. Some specific recommendations were made. Other people were concerned certain proposed developments would interfere with the natural processes in the special areas. A few asked that the final plan include specific guidelines for managing these areas. Little comment was received on the resource conservation and interpretation objectives.

"Kluane can be insulated from consumptive recreation and development patterns if the federal and territorial governments prepare a sound regional plan."

Ian Robertson, Edmonton, Alberta

Information we received on regional considerations can be summed up very easily - the local region can supply all services and facilities for park visitors. In the area of regional planning, a number of people wanted Parks Canada to work closely with the Yukon Government and the local people. They wanted a regional plan for recreation, tourism, wildlife management and pipeline/Shakwak mitigating measures.

The common element "trails" generated much interest. The trails outlined in the alternatives were generally thought to be good. Some suggested improvements in the proposed network. Others thought trails should be developed in the north end. The concern of the few who commented on wilderness expeditions centred around establishing quotas and strictly monitoring activities.

"The person who values wilderness camping, as opposed to the trailer and motorized set, will protect and treat with care the delicate ecosystem of Kluane. The occasional spur road and existing camping facilities are sufficient to hold interest for the highway tourist as suggested."

from a response form

Three types of camping were described in the alternatives: primitive campsites, primitive campgrounds and semi-serviced campgrounds. The first two were generally supported by the public. Various locations were suggested. The semi serviced campground

at Kathleen Lake was felt by some to be the right size; others thought it could increase. Many stated that all other semi-serviced campgrounds should be located outside of the park.



Skiing on the St. Elias Lake Trail

The Alternatives

"The trick is to enable the maximum number of people to have the highest quality wilderness experience with minimum resource use."

Vancouver Bicycle Club

Using the plan principles and accepted ideas four alternative concept plans were drawn. These showed the minimum and maximum levels of development possible, along with two intermediate options. These were not set packages. Variations and combinations were possible. People were asked for the plan which best fit their concept of Kluane's future and what changes could be made to improve that plan. If none of the options were close to their concept then they could describe a plan they would like to see. Very few people chose to develop their own plan from scratch. Most stayed within the range of options outlined in **Kluane Alternatives**. The few who went outside this were at both ends of the spectrum: absolutely no activity by man within the park; or, alternative four does not go far enough in allowing people to use the park. The following section is a brief summary of comments made on the four alternative plans.

Alternative 1

"I am in accordance with alternative 1. Its minimal impact aspect seems appropriate if the wilderness ecosystem is to be effectively preserved."

B. Hornecker, Naton, Alberta

The majority of respondents supported this alternative. Many preferred it without any changes. They saw this plan as providing the best protection for the park's resources. Others suggested adding components from one or more of the other alternatives. Usually only one or two activities or facilities were suggested. Most frequently mentioned were: limited overflights, rafting, more trails, access to the Kaskawulsh glacier, improved access to Mush/Bates Lakes, more camping and more use of park interpretive services.

Alternative 2

"I like this plan [alternative 2] because it allows controlled penetration into wilderness areas - this allows families and older persons to experience a wilderness environment while protecting it."

Larry Bogan, Wolfville, Nova Scotia

This was the next preferred alternative, with and without changes. A major suggested change was the deletion of snowmobiles and motorboats from Kathleen Lake. The shuttle boat service on Mush and Bates Lakes was also questioned. Several thought canoes would be adequate. There was also mixed reaction to the raft tours and to public transit. A few thought that if a road were built in the Slims Valley, then a lift should be built up Vulcan Mountain to view the Kaskawulsh glacier. Generally those supporting this alternative saw it as providing controlled access for a majority of people to the major themes of Kluane.

Alternative 3

"Knowing the park fairly well and being one of those to favour resource protection, I am very impressed with the suggestions made in your alternative 3."

Monty Alford, Whitehorse, Y.T.

Alternatives 3 and 4 were supported by approximately equal numbers of people. In the third option the tramway up Vulcan Mountain and the limited aerial viewing of glaciers were most favoured. The Mush-Bates shuttle and snowmobile and motorboat use of Kathleen Lake were most frequently mentioned for elimination. In both options 3 and 4, there was some concern about activities near special preservation areas.

Alternative 4

"In my opinion the use clause is only catered to in option 4 and then only just barely. The plan 4 package still only affects 1 per cent of the park area. It is not reasonable to consider this 'maximum development' in a national park which must provide visitors with more than Alaska Highway attractions - the essence of the park experience is ice - get them there, provide at least one access facility for the people of Canada [not just the mountaineers]."

J. Thorsell, Edmonton, Alberta

Those supporting this option saw it as the best method of giving a well-rounded experience of the park. They also made a number of suggestions. A few thought there should be road access in the north end; and roads should be built before a commitment is made to air tours. Also suggested was the idea that restricted roads be open to the public in the off-season.

The Park Areas

The relationship of specific areas and activities was discussed by many. The Alder Creek Valley was one of two main access points proposed in the alternatives. Various modes were mentioned in the plans: trails, roads - both public and restricted - and a shuttle boat service for hikers. People made suggestions for changes or improvements to the various proposals. These included substituting canoes or rowboats on the shuttle system, the use of horses instead of vehicles,

allowing snowmobiling on the road, deleting the shuttle service and road, and changing and adding campground locations. Many were concerned about planned activity near the special preservation area at Alder Marsh.

Various proposals around Kathleen Lake presented a number of concerns to many people. Most commonly mentioned was the provision of snowmobiling and motorboating on the lake. Most thought that these activities have no place in Kluane. A few noted that Kathleen would be very dangerous for motorless boats and canoes. There was mixed reaction to expansion of the campground. High concentrations of grizzlies in the Alsek Pass was mentioned by some as reason to keep roads and people out of this area.

As major focus of possible increased activity, proposed development in the Slim River Valley was both praised and criticized. Those who opposed developments in the valley were mainly concerned about the effects on the wildlife and fragile vegetation. Others who saw that road access to the glacier was desirable strongly recommended that only public transit be used. People commenting on the north end of the park stated that some access should have been proposed in the Donjek area. The air tour proposals over the Donjek special preservation area were criticized by some as being inconsistent with preservation.

Issues

The two most popular issues were recreation and methods of access. Many respondents were opposed to any form of motorized recreation in the park. This was especially evident when snowmobiling was discussed. Many wrote to tell us it and motorboating had no place in any national park. In the case of Kluane they said this was doubly so and that there were many areas adjacent to the park for these activities. On the other hand, there were those who wanted these activities in the park. They stressed there was a great deal of interest for snowmobiling both locally and regionally. It was described as one of the few winter activities which would be economically beneficial to local businesses during the slow period. Hiking, backpacking, cross-country, etc. were universally supported.

A great deal of information on recreation in the park was received. People familiar with Kluane told us it was a difficult area to use but offered the visitor many rewarding experiences. Huts, shelters and hostels for summer and winter travel, aircraft for photography, guides and easier access to sites were among the many suggestions. Others familiar with the park wanted limited numbers of people using it. They felt that preservation was the most important concern. They said that the planning team should check the actual user demand for the proposed trails, roads or other facilities before proceeding with them.

"Give all people the chance to experience the icefields and high mountains, etc."

Participant at Whitehorse Meeting

"We all know that one access road begets another and another and so on until the situation gets out of hand. We have seen this in Banff National Park and surely we do not want another Banff in the Yukon."

B.Allan, former Yukoner living in Lethbridge, Alberta

The question of access into Kluane was paramount in both the public's and planners' minds. Various modes were proposed in different alternatives: sightseeing by air, lifts, bus systems, boat tour, boat shuttle system, rafting tour, restricted and public roads and trails. A large number of people favoured the non-mechanized method of access: trails. Another group supported certain of the other modes, under controlled circumstances aimed at reducing impacts on the park. The most popular was public transit in place of private vehicles.

The issue of roads sparked much debate. Some suggested loop roads in the north and south ends of the park. Those who supported alternative 1 generally wanted no new roads built and many existing ones closed. They said that a road would leave a permanent scar which could never be erased. Others said if a road were built, then only public transit be used. Even people who wanted no mechanical access often stated that if for some reason roads were built then buses should be used, not private vehicles. On the other side of the coin some felt that it would be unfair and frustrating not to allow people to use their own vehicles to enter and see the park.

Some people thought sightseeing by air had serious drawbacks and therefore should not be considered. They cited its high cost, the unpredictable bad weather over the park which would cut down on use time and the unknown detrimental effects on wildlife and wilderness values. The supporters of air tours thought they provided the least damaging method to enable many to see the icefield area.

The tramway and lift proposals had their supporters and opponents. Those backing the tram in alternative 3 felt it would enable the greatest number of people to view a major glacier, with minimal impact on the area. Generally they believed that a road in the Slims would be more damaging. Proponents of the alternative 4 lift usually thought it would increase the benefits of a road to the toe of the Kaskawulsh glacier. Others thought that lifts and trams would detract from wilderness values.

There was mixed reaction to the Kathleen Lake boat tour, while the Mush-Bates boat shuttle idea provoked much interest. Many saw this as a motorized recreation activity where hiking trails could just as well be used. Others thought the idea good, while some suggested using canoes or rowboats. Raft tours were generally supported if roads were not constructed as access for this activity alone.

Information Analysis

One of the main concerns regarding resource conservation was the possible effects of the various proposed developments on wildlife, especially bears. Among the many good ideas were suggestions on garbage control, horse/bear conflicts and primitive campsite and road locations to protect the park resources. We were also told of the need to separate bears and man. The future of the grizzly in the park concerned many. Some saw the road and trail development proposals as conflicting with various bird nesting sites. New sites were pointed out. Many people told of problems with both feral and domestic horses. Some stated free-ranging horses had no place in a wilderness area and they would do a great deal of damage. As usual, horse use of trails sparked debate pro and con. There was concern about potential conflicts between hikers and pack trains. Examples from southern parks were often quoted.

The comments and information we received on interpretation tended to be general in nature. How best to interpret the main theme of the park - the great valley glaciers interested many. Some argued for easy access for on-site interpretation. Others preferred off-site to protect other areas of the park. A strong interpretive program was supported. Some felt that too little consideration had been given to the human history of the area. They suggested old-timers give campfire talks. Other suggestions included a highway oriented program, provision for Indian history, and small scale interpretation of special preservation areas.

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The Kluane National Park planning team has, over the past five months received a great deal of information, suggestions, ideas and criticisms on Kluane National Park Alternatives. We are pleased with the help received and thank those who took the time to write or talk to us. Only with this participation can the final plan reflect your concerns. The team will be back to you in the spring with a final draft plan for your review. If in the meantime you have suggestions for improving the public participation or planning program, we will be glad to hear them. Our address remains:

**Parks Canada
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Area 256 - 200 Range Road
Whitehorse, Y.T.
Y1A 3V1**

Phone [403] 668-2116 or

**Parks Canada
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114 Garry Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 1G1**

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